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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000472

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SUBJECT: READOUT NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER
17, 2008

Classified By: Classified by Charge' de Affaires Walter S. Reid for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- AFGHANISTAN: The Secretary General (SYG) obtained North Atlantic Council (NAC) agreement to task NATO Military Authorities to provide rapid military advice on elections support prior to the next Council discussion on January 7. He asked for cooperation from nations to provide the Senior Resource Board with the information it needs to make an early January decision on enlarging the scope of the Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund to include sustainment costs. The International Military Staff gave a year-end review of ISAF operations, reporting that ISAF had grown to 57,000 troops and that international and Afghan military casualties had increased in 2008. Germany asked for information on reports that Gormach District would move from RC-W to RC-N. Canada announced an increase in its ISAF contribution by 332 troops and soon fielding up to 20 helicopters. Germany, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Norway announced financial contributions to the ANA Trust Fund.

-- BALKANS: The SYG said the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) deployment has been progressing well. He called for Allied pressure on Prime Minister Thaci to approve the nominated commander of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) in order to facilitate movement on the KSF stand-up, and Ambassador Volker urged Allies to contribute to the KSF trust fund.

-- AFRICA: The SYG announced that Deputy Assistant SYG Jochems is in Africa to consult with the AU and regional states on counter-piracy and NATO support for the AU.

-- IRAQ: The SYG reported that the Iraqi Council of Ministers had approved a draft law governing the legal status of non-U.S. coalition forces (including the NATO Training Mission) Iraq) and said he would distribute a copy of the draft law to Allies. Assistant Secretary General Howard noted the draft law provides similar, but not identical, legal protections to those afforded to U.S. forces. He also said the law calls for NATO to withdraw by July 31, 2009, but allows for an extension, which he was confident PM Maliki would provide. Allies expressed serious concerns about the possibility of a lapse in the authorization and legal

protections for NTM-I.

-- RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: No discussion

-- TRANSFORMATION: Item postponed until January 2009 meeting.

-- 2009 BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF: Allies agreed to the Secretary-General's proposed compromise budget for 2009.

-- STATEMENTS ON POLITICAL TOPICS: No discussion.

--AOB: Allies approved the proposed allocation of NATO Contact Point Embassy responsibilities for 2009-2010. Several Allies commented that the method for making CPE assignments should be revised given the bruising debate over the assignments.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C/NF) Afghanistan: The Secretary General (SYG) obtained Council approval to task NATO Military Authorities to provide advice on elections support as soon as possible, to inform the next Council discussion scheduled for January 7. Nations are to consider the request from Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to evaluate the possible use of the NATO

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Response Force to supplement the Elections Support Force should force generation come up short. The extraordinary force generation conference for the Elections Support Force is scheduled January 14. The SYG also urged PermReps to encourage their military representatives to work with SHAPE to provide the information requested by the Senior Resource Board by January 5, enabling the committee to make a decision in early January on enlarging the scope of the Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund to include sustainment costs.

13. (C/REL ISAF) Assistant Director of the International Military Staff Operations Division MG Li Gobbi gave a year-end snapshot of ISAF operations in Afghanistan. He said the Military Committee would give a follow-on early January report on the evolution of opposing militant forces in 2008. Li Gobbi said ISAF forces increased from 44,000 to 52,000 troops (among 41 nations) this year due mostly to additional U.S. and French contributions and additional Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT) from Allies. He said there are already confirmed offers for next year from troop contributing nations that will bring the troop total to 57,000. There were improvements in helicopter assets in theatre this year, although ISAF still has critical weaknesses in this area, such as medical evacuation. Li Gobbi showed that the numbers of killed and wounded among international and domestic military forces increased as overall engagement of ISAF and Afghan forces with insurgents increased in 2008. The two primary ISAF operations this year were Operation Shamshir through October, and Operation Tolo, ongoing until next March. ISAF judged Operation Shamshir an overall success (later responding to a Canadian question, Li Gobbi admitted the success was uneven from province to province, especially in the south where effects were less apparent). Transfer of Lead Security Responsibility for Kabul Province is on track for Phase III completion on December 31, which will leave only Sarobi district for Phase IV handover in early 2009. The number of completed Provincial Reconstruction Team projects more than quadrupled this year to 9,868. Li Gobbi mentioned improvements in the Afghan National Army, which is now participating in 70 percent of ISF operations and leading the planning for half. ISAF has a shortage of 17 OMLTs.

¶4. (C/REL ISAF) MG Li Gobbi said ISAF still needs to establish a military liaison element in Islamabad and a transit agreement for NATO. Good news stories for 2008 were the establishment of the first Border Coordination Center and revitalization of the Tri-Partite Commission.

¶5. (C/REL ISAF) Canada questioned the accuracy and effectiveness of ISAF metrics to evaluate operational success on the ground in Afghanistan for non-tangible goals such as separating the population from insurgents. Germany asked to be informed regularly about ISAF's intentions or plans to expand the Regional Command-North boundary & beyond the operations box8 to include Gormach district. MG Li Gobbi assured Germany that the chain of command would keep the Council fully informed. The SYG said the Council should consider taking a decision about changing regional command boundaries and areas of responsibility following military advice in the near future. France noted that the December 14 meeting in Paris hosted by Foreign Minister Kouchner was successful, and included discussions on the Afghanistan region, narcotics, and local and regional cooperation.

¶6. (C/REL ISAF) Canadian PermRep McRae said, &We are not waiting for the phone call, but making new commitments now.8 Canada will increase its troop strength by 332 to a total 2,832, effective February 2009. It will also add 6 Mi-8 transport helicopters to Kandahar, 6 Chinook helicopters, 8 Griffin escort helicopters, and improved Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) systems. Germany said it would contribute 3 million euros to the Law and Order Trust Fund of Afghanistan (LOTFA), with 1.6 million covering police check-point facilities and 1.4 million for police pensions. The

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Netherlands is giving 1 million euros to a helicopter trust fund led by the UK and France.

¶7. (C/REL ISAF) The Bulgarian PermRep announced a prior-to-year-end contribution of 60,000 euros to the ANA Trust Fund, noting that his country saw opportunities for donations now despite ongoing debate at NATO over whether to expand the fund,s scope for recurring costs. Norway is giving 220,000 euros to the ANA Trust Fund before January 1, specifically to ship the remaining three Mi-8 helicopters donated by the Czech Republic to theatre. The Netherlands reminded the group that it already contributed of 10 million euros to the ANA Trust Fund prior to the December ministerial.

¶8. (S/REL NATO) The Czech PermRep called attention to a recent NATO classified report that specifically addresses ongoing attempts by Russian intelligence services to target NATO member states. He asked the SYG to task the appropriate NATO committee with discussing the report, and reminded the Council that it should not forget the importance of counter-intelligence measures. (Comment: This was a by-product of the concurrent bruising budget debate in the Tuesday &Coffee.8 End Comment.)

Balkans

¶9. (C/NF) Balkans: The SYG said the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) deployment had progressed well over the past week. He said there are roughly 1,500 EULEX international staff on the ground, including 50 police in northern Kosovo and 150 in reserve. Ambassador Volker said the U.S. was pleased with the EULEX deployment to date, and the U.S. has its full complement of 80 personnel on the ground in EULEX.

¶10. (C) The SYG said the Kosovo authorities approved the nomination of Behxhet Brajshori as the Deputy Minister of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF), but still need to nominate the second Deputy Minister. He encouraged Allies to press Prime

Minister Thaci to approve the nominated KSF Commander, because his inaction is delaying movement on KFOR,s new tasks of deactivating the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) and standing up the KSF. Ambassador Volker, supported by the SYG, urged Allies to contribute to the KSF trust fund. In response to a Czech request that NATO begin briefing the Serbian military and Serbian Ambassador to NATO Milinkovic on the civilian aspects of the new tasks, Assistant Secretary General for Operations Martin Howard said such a brief has been offered to Ambassador Milinkovic.

Africa

¶11. (C/NF) Africa: The SYG reported that Deputy Assistant SYG for Operations Maurits Jochems was in Africa to discuss NATO support for the AU as well as piracy-related issues. He said Jochems would brief the NAC in early January.

Iraq

¶12. (C/NF) Iraq: The SYG reported that, so far, NATO had received no formal response from the Government of Iraq (GOI) regarding the proposed Exchange of Letters (EOL) authorizing NTM-I to continue beyond December 31, 2008, although he noted the Iraqi Council of Ministers approved a new draft law that sets out the legal basis for NTM-I. The law still must be approved by the Council of Representatives.

¶13. (C/NF) The SYG announced he would circulate a text of the draft law among Allies, and that the protections afforded by this new law are similar to, but not the same as, those in

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the U.S. SOFA. He also said that NATO Legal Advisor DeVidts thinks the law provides adequate authority and protections for NTM-I to continue into 2009. Nevertheless, it is understood that a new EOL is needed, as called for in the new law, per the SYG.

¶14. (C/NF) The SYG acknowledged that if the new Iraqi law is not passed by the end of the year, NATO will have to instruct its commanders to cease operations and confine personnel to base effective January 1, 2009. NATO Assistant SYG for Operations Howard noted that the draft law calls for NTM-I to terminate its mission by July 31, 2009, but makes provision for an extension. PermReps from Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Portugal all expressed serious concern over the potential for a lapse in legal authority and protection for NTM-I. The UK said its authorities were less concerned about these developments and saw the evolving situation as &generally positive.8 (See USNATO septel.)

¶15. (C/NF) Response to Terrorism: No discussion

¶16. (C/NF) Transformation: Items postponed until January 2009 meeting.

2009 Civil Budget

¶17. (C/NF) 2009 Civil Budget: The compromise proposal of the Secretary General for the 2009 Civil Budget was accepted by consensus. The compromise budget proposal contained the following significant items:

-- The two major priorities of the SCR,s office in Kabul and Strategic Communications will be funded via reallocations from other parts of the budget.

-- The NOS security programs will be reviewed carefully in 2009 and a multi-year solution will be agreed as to NOS needs.

-- The dynamic elements of the budget, including the liaison offices in Tbilisi and Kyiv, will be handled via in-year reviews as required.

-- The sustainability of core programs will be addressed in the 2010 Medium Term Financial Plan.

-- The compromise on NATO-Russia funding permits the Secretary-General to consider the way forward in Russia relations before the second half of the year, in conjunction with the two ministerials and the summit in early 2009.

-- The compromise funds NATO-Russia programs for the Resettlement Center for the first six months only with a review required by July 1.

-- Euro 977,000 was found as four 2008 programmes had not required all their funding. Euro 843,000 was diverted from funds previously allocated to ICTM revitalization.

-- These funds were allocated as follows: Euro 300K to NOS security requirements, 250K restored to MD/ICI/Ukraine partnerships (almost all to MD), 100K to offices in Kyiv and Tbilisi, 170K to move a parking lot to make room for the building housing the two new NATO members.

-- In the end, Turkey did not press her requirement that SPS funding cuts be reinstated in the 2010 budget by decision now, but pressed for &following the 2006-agreed five-year plan funding levels through 2011.8

¶18. (C/NF) Statements on Political Subjects: No Discussion.

Any Other Business

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¶19. (C/NF) Any Other Business: The Council approved NATO Contact Point Embassy assignments for 2009-2010, which had been negotiated during the Perm Reps, informal lunch meeting the day before. The SYG noted that Slovenia was left with no CPE assignment for next year, and so the decision sheet would include an understanding that Slovenia would be assigned CPE for Montenegro for 2011-2012. Numerous Allies noted how flexible they had been in the negotiations and stressed how they had settled for less than their first choices, and expressed the hope this would be taken into account in the next round of negotiations. Several Allies commented on the need to find a better way to assign CPEs to avoid similar difficult negotiations in the future.
VOLKER